

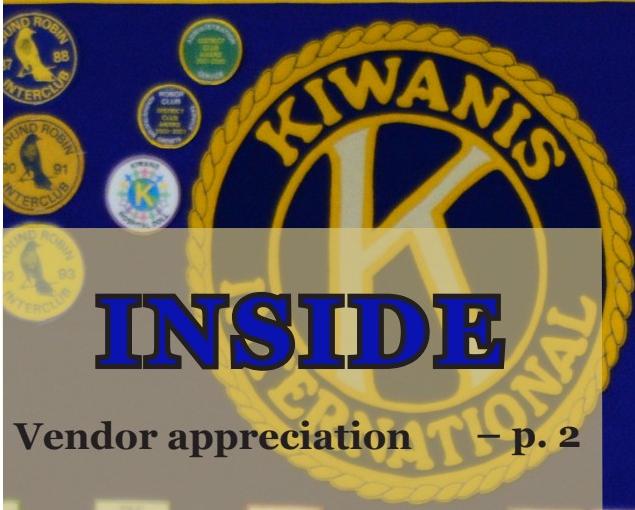


GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

March 2014 VOLUME 5 ISSUE 3

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Vendor appreciation	— p. 2
Poverty simulation	— p. 2
In the same boat	— p. 3
Gerrymandering	— p. 4
Amnesty Int'l at U-M	— p. 5
Housing the unhoused	— p. 5
Jordan Morgan serves	— p. 7
Puzzles	— p. 8
Poetry	— p. 9
Calendar of events	— p. 9
Waterman Scholarship	— p. 10
Apple crisp	— p. 12



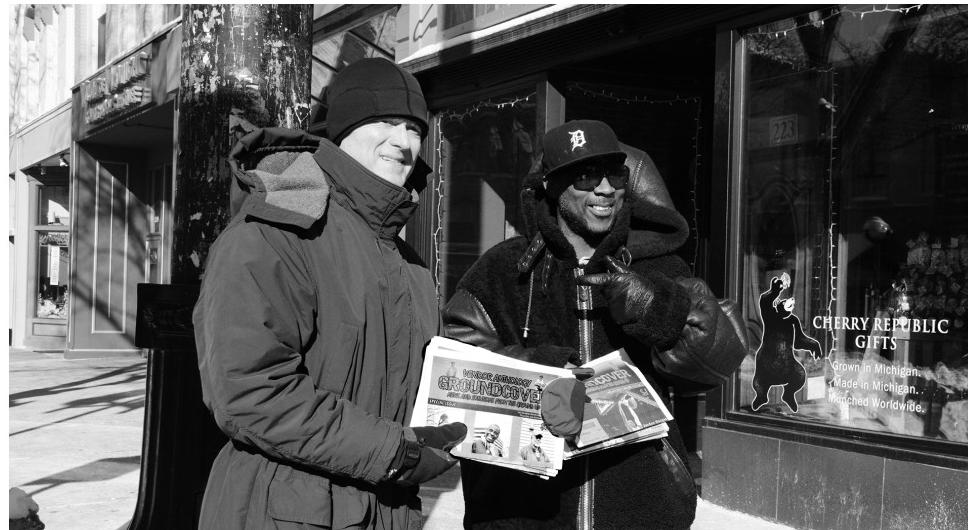
Vendors feel the appreciation, corporations feel extorted



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

Life can be so paradoxical – on the macro-level a situation can be disastrous, while on a micro-level it is magically perfect. We see that in vendors' lives, perhaps recently unhoused yet beaming over their good fortune when someone gives them a generous tip or a piece of essential clothing or equipment. And I feel it when I look at our federal and state political systems and compare that to life in Ann Arbor.

During Vendor Appreciation Week in early February, Mayor John Hieftje and University of Michigan (U-M) basketball player Jordan Morgan took to the streets with some of our vendors, selling Groundcover News and educating



Mayor John Hieftje and Groundcover News vendor James Woods team up to sell Groundcover during International Vendor Appreciation Week in early February.

the community about it. Both were so eloquent in describing the role Groundcover plays in providing a lifeline to those among us who need to get back on our feet. They moved and inspired me.

Groundcover vendors touch me on a regular basis with their commitment, generosity, and appreciation of their customers and of those who provide services the vendors use. Their excitement over selling with Morgan and the mayor was infectious. But they inspire me most when I hear them describe the mission of Groundcover and what it means to them. You soon will be able to hear them, too. Members of the new U-M Groundcover student group are interviewing many of our vendors, and we will be posting the interviews on our website, which also has photos and interviews from Vendor Appreciation Week on the page so named.

The contrast between our local celebrities' ready interest in helping out and spending time with the disenfranchised, even though it meant spending hours at a time on the streets in frigid temperatures, and the difficulty of even scheduling a meeting with federal representatives, got me thinking once more about who is getting face time with our elected officials.

Before I could get all worked up again about corporations using wealth to gain access and influence, I stumbled upon a CNN interview with John Hofmeister, the former president of Shell Oil Company. Hofmeister was railing against politicians extorting campaign contributions from corporations! He claimed that corporate leaders who did not pay to play found themselves threatened with onerous regulations or weeks testifying before hostile committee members. As Shell Oil has a company

GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

Susan Beckett, Publisher
contact@groundcovernews.com

Lee Alexander, Editor
c.lee@groundcovernews.com

Andrew Nixon, Associate Editor

Contributors

Renna Ayyash
Zoe Behnke
Martha Brunell
Deborah Gough
Jan Hartmann
Keagan Irrer
Paul Lambert
Ian Mark
Lisa Sonnenburg
Martin Stolzenberg
Amelia Zak

Letters to the Editor:
editor@groundcovernews.com

Story or Photo Submissions:
submissions@groundcovernews.com

Advertising:
contact@groundcovernews.com

www.groundcovernews.org
facebook.com/groundcover
423 S. 4th Ave, Ann Arbor
734-707-9210

policy prohibiting corporate political donations, Hofmeister felt compelled to make them personally.

"I feel extorted," Hofmeister told CNN's Drew Griffin. "Every time I wrote a check I felt that it was a form of extortion, the price of entry, because of the reception that you got when you contributed versus the reception when you did not contribute."

It seems the corruption is now systemic, with deleterious consequences for nearly all involved: politicians whose lives have become more about raising money than creating good government, corporations whose profits are being siphoned off to exorbitant CEO salaries that find their way into political campaigns, and ordinary citizens who feel completely disconnected from and unrepresented by their government. The only winners are those using their wealth to manipulate government to give them unfair advantages.

This lack of integrity on a grand scale stands in such stark contrast to the integrity we encounter on a daily basis around here. People who trade convenience and cost to minimize their carbon footprints and buy locally grown and produced goods. People who stop on a frigid day to exchange pleasantries and provide a hand-up to fellow community members working to rebuild their lives. It is such a privilege to live in a community like ours – a privilege made possible by the many citizens who take the time to make it so great

My afternoon as a widow on Social Security

by Ian Mark
U-M Student Contributor

Walking into the welfare and poverty simulation, I was more than ready. After a late night of partying, I had slept in until sometime around noon. I lounged around for a short while before taking a hot shower. Afterwards, I feasted on sausage links, hash browns and a Western omelet in the University of Michigan (U-M) dining hall with some friends. I headed off to the simulation well-rested and well-fed.

Of course, being a privileged, financially stable college student, I didn't think twice about any of this. It was all second nature. The last thing to cross my mind was whether I was taking the food, my room, or my bed for granted.

But that's one of the reasons why the U-M Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning put in the time and energy to run a Welfare Simulation on campus. Participants were assigned various roles as low-income individuals and tasked with doing their best to make ends meet. Some people were given roles as parents, some people



Poverty simulation participant looks with trepidation on the next life event coming her way.

were given roles as children or teenagers; I was Vera Vimmer, an 85-year-old widow.

We were given various assets and budgetary concerns. I was given an income of around \$500 a month through Social Security. One of my first steps was to

apply for food stamps, as I had a feeling my budget would be tight. This helped me out slightly, but I still found myself pawning every non-essential item I had to try to pay the bills. One elderly couple pawned a wedding ring after

see SIMULATION, page 3

LOOKING WITHIN

In the same boat



by Rev. Dr. Martha
Brunell
Groundcover
Contributor

I've had a block print on one of the walls of my home for years. I bought it at an outdoor, autumn art fair in Saint Louis. The block print artist lives and creates in Iowa now, but his art business began when he painted signs in northern Michigan. This particular print is a night scene with the suggestion of twinkling stars and a large full moon behind a rowboat on the water. The small boat is completely filled with a brown dog staring down into the water at a thick-lipped fish, a white cat and a blue bird with one wing pointing to the right. The artist's

caption simply reads, "All In The Same Boat." Pausing before this print, I remember we are always in this life together.

That remembering is present for me at other times, too. Once every four years in February, I confess to being a Winter Olympics junkie. This year is no exception. One of my early childhood television memories is the 1960 Winter Olympics. As a seven-year-old, I was watching black-and-white images coming across the nation from Squaw Valley, California. To a child in snowy, upstate New York, the Winter Olympics were enchanting. Every Winter Olympics year I stumble upon some new image or metaphor from the Games that makes its way into my preaching or writing.

This year's image comes from the two-person luge event. Growing up, I had

some great sledding moments and enjoyed similar moments when my children were young. However, luge lifts sledding to a whole new plane. In the two-person luge event, teammates are layered on a small, quickly moving sled. To us spectators, they seem to fly feet-first on narrow runners down an icy course. A typical speed is 90 miles per hour. The bottom person can't see the track ahead and is steering with his shoulders. The top person can see but isn't touching the sled and steers with his calf muscles. I marvel at the partnership involved in this event. Each of the two lugers adds an essential element to a successful run. The two on the luge sled, like three animals in the block-printed rowboat on my wall, are unquestionably in the moment together.

My writing for Groundcover News reliably reminds me of how a wide

array of people can be in modestly-scaled actions side by side. Some of those actions, like this paper, make a tremendous and life-changing difference. We are old and young; new people to the paper and veteran writers, vendors, customers, and planners; well-housed and housing-vulnerable; members of faith communities and justice-seeking people who claim no faith affiliation; hopeful and desperate; abundant in patience or urgency... and the list goes on. We are all in the same boat. We have different roles. We bring varied gifts to the table that help us steer our way through difficult realities. Although some of us occupy more favorable positions in the scheme of things, we are always and ever in this together, no one better than another and everyone needed. We can treasure this reality gazing at a block print, enjoying the Winter Olympics, or casting our lot with Groundcover News.

Student poverty simulation

continued from page 2

having been married for 55 years. This hit me, as it seemed like something that would happen out in the real world, and I'm sure it has.

After that, I was left at a loss as to where else I could go for an income, and I still had rent to pay. At 85 years old, I knew that I wouldn't be hired anywhere. I ended up babysitting for "neighbors" – people sitting near me with kids that needed to be watched. If they weren't watched while the single parent was running essential errands, they'd receive a visit from Child Protection Services. Several people made sure to remind me that in reality, an individual as old as me would never have the energy to watch two young kids, and I'd have to agree.

At the end of the simulation, I had gone without food for two weeks (half the simulation) and struggled to pay the bills. While I was barely, just barely able to pay for rent, medicine, some food, utilities and other miscellaneous costs, I was unable to make mandatory loan payments or adequately feed myself.

After the simulation, there was a debriefing discussing how the event had gone for everyone and what could be learned from it.

"It was a lesson in humility," one student admitted.

Administrators discussed how from a position of financial stability, it is easy to look at low-income individuals and pass judgment, wondering why many do the things they do. It's easy to judge others from a position of relative wealth and wonder why they are resorting to crime or doing other things we would consider shameful. Being a part of the

simulation helped to add perspective and show the dire circumstances that poverty forces people into.

"You can work full-time for minimum wage and still qualify for food stamps," lamented Karen Schaumann, the director of the event.

The simulation was very effective in promoting understanding of welfare and poverty. For instance, it would be tough to believe the myth of the "lazy freebooter on food stamps" after the event. Combating these misconceptions was one of the key goals of the simulation.

Fatema Haque, a graduate intern at the Ginsberg Center, had the following to say: "One of the most important things was to get participants to challenge existing paradigms of welfare and poverty."

The administrators also stressed that poverty is always closer than we think it is. While we are trained to view poverty as elsewhere and somewhat distanced from us, there are many students here at U-M who use welfare assistance programs to get by. This is something I have to remind myself of – the fact that I cannot assume the person sitting next to me in class enjoys financial stability.

The event ended with a push for those involved to mobilize and fight for a minimum wage increase in Michigan. They encouraged us to check out miunited.org/minwagevolunteer, where interested individuals can find out how to get involved, and work to get the issue on the ballot this fall.

Looking around the room, I saw other participants smiling and giggling as their teenage children were arrested for dealing drugs or some other ab-

surd situation unfolded. I was among them; to us, it was a game rather than reality. I still couldn't help but think about how similar situations happen to innumerable people every single day. For them, it is anything but a laughing matter. Nevertheless, I found myself a little stressed-out at times throughout the event, running fingers through my hair and squeezing my forehead as I wracked my brain for any ideas to make ends meet. That said, I'm sure you can't really know what living in poverty or on welfare is like until you've actually lived through it. You certainly can't learn what it's like simply by spending three hours on a Sunday afternoon in a well-furnished room at the University of Michigan.

While no substitute for the experience of actual poverty, the simulation still provided participants valuable insight into the brutal, cyclical nature of poverty. By the end of the day, it was clear that sustainable solutions, if they exist at all, are very hard to come by. While efforts to donate and provide relief to low-income individuals do help, it is clear that in order to significantly alleviate poverty, we need systemic reform.

The take-away? Increasing the minimum wage is nothing short of essential to solving the problem of poverty.

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Majority rules – or does it? (*Gerrymandering Part Two*)

by Martin Stolzenberg
Groundcover Contributor

In *Part One*, the history of gerrymandering, a practice to deny citizens of their basic right to have their ballots count in elections, was traced to its source in our country and its development as a political tool was identified. Now read about the extent of gerrymandering here in Michigan and the steps that we can take to combat this offensive and dangerous imposition on our freedom.

How likely are attempts at gerrymandering to be a factor in the near future?

The Republican Party is being squeezed. They lost the popular vote in five of the last six presidential elections. (Senator Gore, a Democrat, pulled more popular votes in losing the 2000 election than the winner, George W. Bush.) Women, younger voters and minority groups are important voter blocks tilting toward the Democratic Party. Looking at these disheartening trends, Republican strategists must come up with approaches to appeal to these groups or undertake tactics to minimize Democratic votes.

Moving toward more moderate positions hasn't happened, as the Republican Party continues to tilt even further to the right. Unfortunately, undertaking maneuvers to minimize Democratic Party advantages is a more promising path. Short of getting the Republican-led legislatures to simply outlaw the Democratic Party, gerrymandering is the most effective device to minimize opposition voters. Recently, large, critical states like Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas have successfully undertaken highly partisan gerrymandering processes, all in favor of the Republicans. But states like Maryland and Illinois also have disproportionate voting preferences representation favorable to Democrats. It's not all one-sided.

Another unsavory tactic, voter suppression, was attempted in Republican controlled states, especially in the South and mid-West. This took the form of the creation of stricter voter identification measures targeted toward less affluent citizens – those most likely to vote for Democratic candidates. This was done under the guise of preventing illegal voters. Few of these activities succeeded. When challenged, the courts have mostly ruled against such actions. Also, there has been a back-fire effect in these voter suppression states as the potentially disenfranchised have gone out of their way to vote and assure that their voices are heard.

Why was 2010 so important in acceler-



What is gerrymandering?

Two important events converged. First, this was a decennial year, meaning the Census would be used by the state legislatures to divide up the district boundaries for the next 10 years. Second, 2010 saw some "presidential voter regret" following the 2008 presidential election, in which Obama won states handily. In that off-year election, Republicans swept some key states' legislatures and were in a position to control the make-up of their district boundaries. And they did.

Republicans, aware that they were losing power at the national ballot box, created districts which kept the voting in their favor, despite a return of many voters to the Democratic side in the 2012 election. These Republican-devised boundaries cannot be changed by the legislature until 2020. Even then, unless the balance of power and number of allocated representatives change, or regulations to curb gerrymandering are enacted, these districts may stay in effect.

It can get worse. Wikipedia reported in an article on gerrymandering that not only are partisan redistrictings possible in census years, but the U.S. Supreme Court, in their infinite wisdom, came up with a ruling that permits redistricting whenever a state wants. In a 2006 ruling the Court upheld Congressional redistricting in Texas in 2003 after just having one in 2001. The Court felt there

was nothing in the Constitution that prohibited this action. Fortunately, no other states have followed this example, but there is a possibility this action could rear its ugly head again with the Supreme Court's blessing.

What can be done to foil gerrymandering?

Parties can temper the effects of gerrymandering by encouraging their own moderate voters to simply vote in their primaries. While this has not been the case historically, such movements are starting to develop. In the 2013 primary elections, moderate Republican groups, led by the Chamber of Commerce, poured money into November primary elections to help defeat extremist candidates. This was successful in some races and may augur well for future contested primary elections.

And gerrymandering can be reversed. In an article in *The New Republic* in April 2011, Nicholas Stephanopoulos said, "In Arizona in the year 2000, citizens voted for the creation of a nonpartisan redistricting commission. Californians did the same thing in 2012. Florida established rigorous criteria for the legislature to follow in establishing voting districts."

Throughout the country, voters want reform to assure more representative voting districts. A Columbia/Harvard study showed that more than 80 percent of respondents with an opinion want to take redistricting rights away

from the legislature.

The states' propensity for drawing partisan district maps could be stopped by a federal statute. Representative Steve Cohen of Tennessee introduced such a bill in Congress in January 2013 called the Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act. The bill requires states to appoint independent commissions that "emphasize geographic considerations and compactness of districts rather than political affiliations." We'll see how far that gets in our already gerrymandered Congress.

Generally, attacking gerrymandering in the courts has been unsuccessful.

What can we in Michigan do to push back gerrymandering in our state?

As already noted, Michigan has nothing on this issue to be proud of, as one of the Rust Belt states where gerrymandering has become the rule of law. President Barack Obama carried our state by 9.5 percent of the electorate in 2012, the sixth time in a row that Democrats have won in recent presidential elections. Despite having achieved over a 240,000 vote plurality for Democratic candidates for Congress, the party wound up with five seats compared with nine for Republicans. On a national level, this is only the fourth time in the past 100 years that one party got more votes for the House but failed to secure a majority of the seats.

It doesn't have to be this way. In our state and about half of the other states, voters can petition for a ballot initiative to create measures that impose strict non-partisan criteria of the way districts are chosen. This transfers the redistricting process from the partisan legislatures to a more impartial body.

Getting it done is another thing. However, one reporter stepped up with a detailed roadmap. Stephen Wolf's plan appears in an American political blog called *The Daily Kos*. In a January 22, 2013 article titled "Republicans STOLE the House! Here is what YOU can do to Fight Back! Calling Michigan Priority #1," Wolf used a program called *Dave's Redistricting App* to simulate what a non-partisan citizens' redistricting commission would likely have done when redistricting Michigan for the 2012 elections. Based on his non-partisan program, Democrats might have fairly won three more seats in the state to control eight out of the 14 seats in Michigan.

see GERRYMANDING, page 11

MAKING CHANGE

The on-campus fight for human rights

by Amelia Zak
U-M Student Contributor

There is an ever-present metaphorical “bubble” around college students. The “bubble” locks us into our own conventions, making it easy to detach ourselves from the problems of external communities, both locally and internationally. And it’s easy: course loads, extracurricular activities, and social lives easily distract students from expanding their perspective.

In an age where the preponderance of social media and technology keep us instantly and adequately informed, the knowledge gap of many adolescents seems to remain intact. The millennial generation carries the stigma of having all this information at its fingertips, but with none of motivation to act on it. On Monday nights at the University of Michigan (U-M), the executive board and members of the U-M chapter of Amnesty International fight back against this stereotype.

The inherent goal of Amnesty International, a prominent non-governmental organization founded in 1962, is to bring attention to instances of social injustice and promote human rights internationally. Here in Ann Arbor, the members of Amnesty International do their best to fulfill these lofty goals. But the first step in this is education. No real progress on an issue can ensue without public awareness or proper understanding.



So, in making strides towards better understanding, every club meeting begins with the writing of letters based on a new Urgent Notice. Issued by the headquarters of Amnesty International, an urgent notice is a standard version of a letter of discontent regarding a specific case of injustice occurring in the world. All attendees of the club meeting then write their own version of the letter, expressing similar feelings of discontent and calling for a change. In the grand scheme of things, it is a minute act; however, the resulting knowledge and empowerment is the greatest source of power for the club, so placing it at the very start of meetings is very appropriate.

Members present on current issues they are particularly interested in, rang-

ing from gay activism in Russia to the myriad issues in Syria and the rest of the Middle East. The group discussion unfolds in ways that aren’t always appropriate in a classroom setting – personal anecdotes and opinions are recommended and respected, and the discourse is fluid and fun.

It is a group of interested students who are willing to act on their innate desire to give back. “[Experiencing] people uniting from all around the world – and even on campus – to protect our human rights, fight injustices, and enact real change is incredibly inspiring,” said Arielle Wisbaum, the External Chair of the on-campus club.

Just this past year, in fact, the club participated in an international Write-

A-Thon that Amnesty chapters from all over the world took part in. These letters helped to release three “prisoners of conscience” – defined by Amnesty as “people who have been jailed because of their political, religious or other conscientiously-held beliefs, ethnic origin, sex, color, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth, sexual orientation or other status, provided that they have neither used nor advocated violence.”

“Seeing the effects that can result from groups like Amnesty motivates us to do even more,” said Wisbaum.

Along with the club’s necessary international interests, Amnesty International at U-M is working for human rights locally. For a city of its size and population, Ann Arbor has an inordinate amount of homelessness. It is unchanging stubborn problem that is constantly being addressed by our community.

Amnesty International at U-M will be hosting a benefit concert, with the help of other organizations like Groundcover News, called Jamnesty. Music groups from all over the area will be performing at the B-Side to raise money for homeless shelters throughout Ann Arbor. The concert is set for March 21, and the club is working diligently to ensure its success. It’s just a little taste of what the Amnesty International Club at the University of Michigan is doing to encourage social justice, promote human rights, and break the stereotype of the oblivious college kid.

Housing the unhoused is the fiscally responsible choice

by Keagan Irrer
Groundcover Contributor

Homelessness is expensive.

I’ve seen firsthand the psychological and physical toll it takes on individuals. The people worried about where they’re going to sleep at night and where their next meal is coming from. To be homeless is to suffer, and for that reason alone, the homeless deserve our compassion and support.

But let’s set those things aside. Let’s set aside any arguments grounded in pathos. Let’s evaluate homelessness only on its financial implications for our society. Take it in terms of pure, cold, hard cash: How much do you think it costs taxpayers each year, on average, to have a single person homeless?

Anywhere between \$35,000 and \$150,000 per year, according to a study conducted by Philip Mangano, homelessness policy czar under George W. Bush.

That takes into account ER visits, jail time, hospital stays, shelters, and a variety of other taxpayer-funded services that homeless people use. We’re spending this kind of money to keep people on the streets, when we could simply buy them housing for far less than that – and connect them with social workers and medical attention. Preventive care could cut down on as much as 80 percent of homeless ER visits, according to the social justice nonprofit Green Doors. The average cost of providing housing? Approximately \$13-25,000 per year, according to Mangano, translating into a minimum savings of \$10,000 per year, per person.

Solving homelessness is within our reach. It turns out that the simple, obvious solution – simply giving them homes – is also the best one, both in terms of addressing the problem and reducing expenditures. It makes sense from both a humanitarian and financial standpoint.

The only reason anyone could have to

oppose this, I think, is from a philosophical standpoint. I’ve heard plenty of stereotypes about the homeless – that they’re lazy, that they don’t want to work, that they deserve their station in life. It’s true that many unhoused people have made mistakes that have contributed to their homelessness; alcohol and drug abuse are common. It’s also true that a few people don’t want to work, and will simply game the system.

But they are in the minority. I’ve seen firsthand this truth: most homeless people want to improve their lives. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, 87 percent want to work – it’s just that they don’t have a job that pays them enough, or they can’t find a job. According to the Coalition, 65 percent have a mental illness, disability, or other health issues that significantly impede their ability to work. Should these people be punished simply because a small minority might be too lazy to look for a job? When a factually unfounded worldview causes unneces-

sary human suffering, isn’t it time to start questioning it?

If we truly want housing-challenged people to become productive members of society, then they need a little help. Yes, sometimes unhoused people manage to find a way out of their situation, but not all of them do, and that’s partially dependent on luck – hard work alone won’t necessarily get it done. You can try to argue that homeless people should pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, but most homeless people I’ve known don’t have boots, or straps – metaphorical or otherwise.

Housing should be a right, not a privilege. Nobody should have to suffer the indignity of being without a home. Providing permanent supportive housing to the homeless is the right thing to do, morally and financially, and I hope you will join me in calling for our elected officials to do something about it. We can end one of the great scourges of our time, if only we can summon the will.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Delightful day for a dip – Kiwanis sponsors another polar plunge

by Renna Ayyash
Groundcover Contributor

On a day that's 16 degrees and feels even colder, most people decide to stay inside – or at the very least, pack on several layers of clothing if they must go outside. However, on February 8, participants in the annual Whitmore Lake Chilly Dip acted perversely to this inclination. On that cold winter day, 12 brave people voluntarily plunged into the frozen-over Whitmore Lake.

A mother's words to her curious three-year-old son perfectly summarized a typical view of this event: "They carve out part of the ice and then crazy people jump in it."

It felt, however, as though everyone involved – from spectators to participants to coordinators – were very friendly and not the least bit crazy. More surprising was that nobody was nervous. Nobody could wait to get started; even the participants were raring to go.

The event was planned by the Kiwanis Club of the Greater Whitmore Lake Area, who saw to it that all the right precautions were in place. They had a tent set up on the snow-covered shore, equipped with a changing room, a warming station, warm food, and hot chocolate. They also had a medical team on site in case anything went wrong. Available at the registration table were tips on staying safe during the dip.

Promptly at two o'clock, the dipping began. A crowd of spectators encircled the hole carved out of the 18-inch-thick ice and watched as each participant emerged from the tent and walked down the cleared path to their freezing fate. An announcer introduced each person individually or in pairs, as many participated as such, and gave a little information about the person including their purpose for participating. The reasons for participation were about as varied as the costumes people wore to take the dive, which ranged from a block-M t-shirt to a grass skirt and lei.

All the proceeds from the event were donated to the local Kiwanis group, which was the biggest motivator for most people. As Denise Kavisch explained, "It's for the Whitmore Kiwanis, and they give to the community. It's the best way for a citizen of the community to actually get involved and give back."

Tori Hans is an example of that giving back, as she had been a recipient of a Kiwanis scholar-



Valerie Sharp plunges into the sown hole in icy Whitmore Lake as part of the Kiwanis Chilly Dip on February 8.

ship when she was younger and used the Chilly Dip as a way to repay that. That was not her sole reason for taking the dive, however. She participated with her husband, Christopher Robinson, on their one-year anniversary. Christopher dipped last year and Tori swore to him she would do it with him the following year, so they both came to fulfill their promises. The last reason many people decided to participate was just for the fun of it.

When asked why he kept coming back, third-year returning dipper George casually answered, "Well, I wasn't doing anything else today, and it's fun!"

2014 marked the fifth consecutive Chilly Dip. It is the first event of the year for Kiwanis, and Sue Laity, one of the chairs for the event, estimated that this single event raised about \$3,000.



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with the University of Michigan (U-M) Hospital, where Kiwanis provides educational and recreational activities for the children being treated there. Members also contribute monetarily to the education program at the U-M Mott's Children Hospital.

Overall, the Ann Arbor club ends up giving \$280,000 back to the community from which they raise money. There is a youth and community service committee within the club which gives 180,000 of those dollars to about 85 different organizations in the Ann Arbor area. Which organizations receive monetary support is decided through an online application process. A committee of 25 members votes on what would be the best use of the club's money. Kiwanis then works closely with the chosen organizations to ensure that the money is used in the way it was intended. This oversight guarantees efficiency and honesty in the monetary transactions that occur between the club and its beneficiaries.

Kiwanis operates on an international level as well, extending their local impact to a global one. The Ann Arbor club donates approximately \$100,000 to

see KIWANIS, page 11

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Jordan Morgan on faith and service off the court

by Susan Beckett

It is ironic that Jordan Morgan, a cerebral man with a gift for seeing what is coming, has decided to take life day-by-day. He senses that he has a role to fulfill in life and that it will unfold at the right time. For now, having learned that he performs best when his attention is on others, he's devoting himself to helping and positively affecting as many people as he can.

"No matter what I do, I want to make sure I can help and benefit as many people as possible. I've come to realize that you have the most effect on the world around you through your interactions with people... so whatever I do, I just want to make sure that I can touch as many lives as possible," says Morgan.

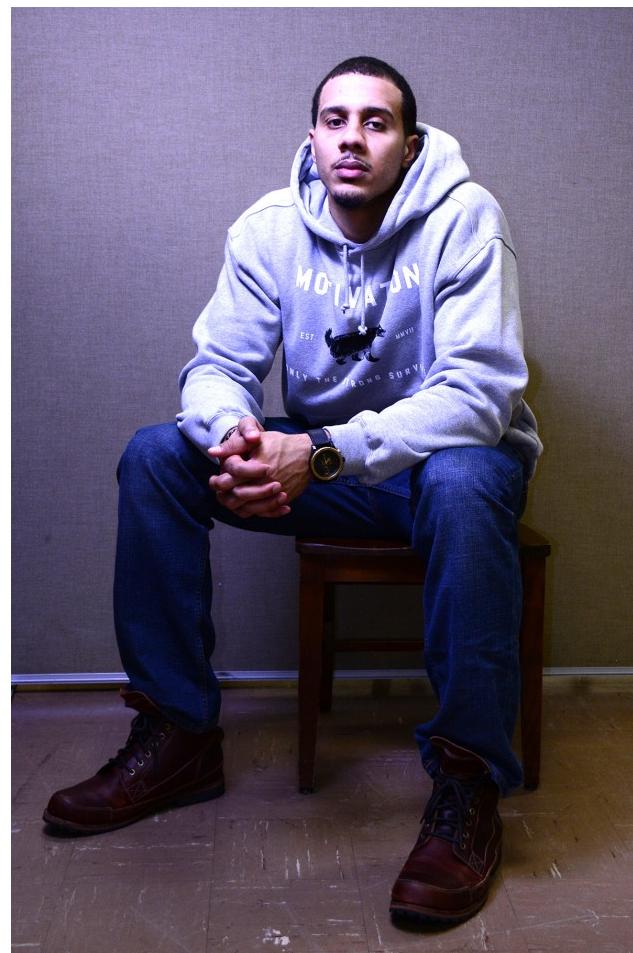
Morgan put that philosophy into action earlier this month when he took to the streets with Groundcover vendors. He learned from Joe and Tony how to get passersby to stop long enough to tell them about Groundcover News; and he picked up techniques for staving off the February cold. The next day, he went out again and used what he'd learned to help newer vendors Paula and Fred. He conversed with all and graciously autographed each issue sold, even when it meant removing his bare hand from the warmth of his pocket.

A difficult season last year helped crystallize Morgan's approach to life. The inner faith and values from his childhood had been caked over with the veneer of big-time basketball success, and like many athletes, Morgan was basing his self-worth on others' assessments of him as a player. When a severely sprained ankle prevented him from playing at an elite level last spring, it was a big blow to his self-esteem.

"I had to be broken to realize that I was so much more than a basketball player," Morgan says.

As he relied on faith to return him to health, he began to have faith that his life would unfold in a meaningful way without him forcing it in a particular direction. As part of a reflective self-assessment exercise for one of his management classes, Jordan asked those who knew him to recall when they saw him perform at his best. Analyzing the responses, he realized that he performed best when his focus was on others, not himself.

Morgan returned to his alma mater, the University of Detroit Jesuit High School, to watch a basketball game, and saw with new eyes the school slogan: *Meant for others*. It reminded him of



the values he had acquired there, of faith and being a man, and that his best friends are the ones he made there.

He had new appreciation for the decision his parents made to send him there instead of the Redford Public Schools he had been attending or to a basketball powerhouse. Morgan had risen to the academic challenge, taking AP calculus and physics and a course in electronics, graduating with a 3.5 average. He parlayed that success into an engineering undergraduate degree from U-M in industrial and operations engineering, and soon will complete his master's degree in manufacturing engineering.

These accomplishments, which came fairly easily to him, were not figuring into his self-evaluation. Adversity is not new to Morgan, but as a child he never developed any strategies to deal with it. He was hard on himself and had trouble letting go and moving on.

Morgan's mom left the Air Force when he was two and moved them to Michigan, and they stayed with various relatives while she got herself established, finally settling in Redford Township. Family lore has it that when he was about four, Morgan told his mom that one day he'd be rich and famous and buy them a house.

When he was 10, his mother married the ex-Navy man who, three years later, officially adopted him.

"He's always been my father, always treated me like his son. He's my dad, no

matter what. I used to tell my mom that I wanted a dad, and I wanted brothers and sisters and a dog. And I got all of that at one time," says Morgan.

Morgan started playing basketball in the recreation league when he was eight, and they stuck him in the post because he was taller than the other kids. After a couple of years, people advised his mom to get him some coaching and he started playing in the AAU league for Marvin Bryant's Detroit Roadrunners. That was when Morgan started to love basketball, and he thrived under Coach Marv's tutelage from age 11 until 15 when he coached them in the AAU National tournament that was held in Detroit that year. He then moved on

to the LeBron James travel team, King James Shooting Stars, based out of Cleveland. He has since played against some of those Shooting Star teammates, such as Jamaal Harris of Eastern Michigan University, in college.

Morgan's parents had another child together, J.T., whom Morgan has

been teaching and guiding through the basketball world since he was a young child.

"I try to give him some of the coaching and teaching him things that I didn't get taught at that age. He's got all the resources I never had... I have coaches, teachers that will help train him with skill development. These are people I worked with as I got older, but he can work with them now."

"I taught him to shoot – no one taught me how to shoot when I was little. And I had him practice dribbling so he can be a solid player, so he can be a better player than me," Morgan muses.

A summer trip to the Ivory Coast with Athletes in Action gave Morgan the opportunity to test his skills against the African National team while incorporating God into every component of his life and focusing on others.

"I glorify God in everything I do. The way I compete is a way to worship," Morgan affirms.

Though he's taking it day-by-day, it is obvious how much Jordan Morgan loves playing basketball and treasures his time doing so at the University of Michigan. And it is also obvious that he is so much more than just a basketball player!



St. Francis of Assisi

P A R I S H
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"I was a stranger and you welcomed me...."
Let us serve one another as Jesus did, with love.

Mass Schedule

Saturday

5:00 p.m.

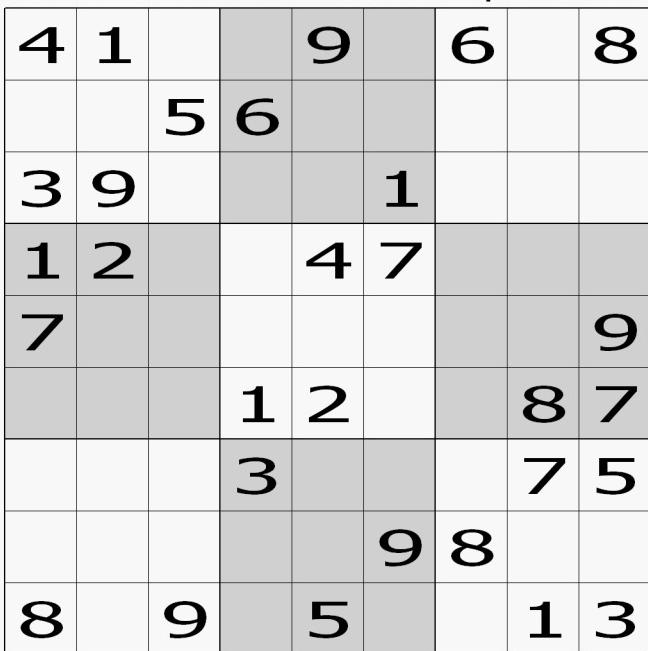
Sunday

7:00 a.m. 8:45 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:15 p.m. & 5 p.m.

St Francis of Assisi Parish
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Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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www.stfrancisa2.com

PUZZLES

Sudoku ★★★☆☆ 4puz.com



Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Cryptoquote

"LIAT GPW'EA TPM HM MIA
MHVQA, PYMATMXUAO
GPW'EA PT MIA UATW."
- CAEAUG UPOO

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcov-

er News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:
contact@groundcovernews.com
734-972-0926

ACROSS

1. ____ for Life, Kirk Douglas movie
5. Deteriorate through use
9. Actor Farr
14. Chinese manufacturer of sports apparel
15. Killer whale
16. The Donald's ex
17. Nickname of the composer of the theme for "Monty Python's Flying Circus"
19. Minstrels
20. Infuriated
21. Assessment; tax (British)
23. Native of the Hebrides
24. Electrical measurement unit (abbr.)
25. Cheerleader's exclamation
27. Pledge
29. Keystone Studios' slapstick officer
30. Fashionable activities
32. Ad
35. High priest
38. Ireland
40. Aged
42. Tennis champion Lendl
43. Inert gas
45. Solo melody
46. Hilarity
48. Ruination
49. John Bennett ____, Nobel prize winner
50. ____ it up
51. Verbal
53. Racetrack in Brooklyn (abbr.)
55. "I hear, and I forget. ____, and I remember..."
57. Not either
58. Spongy substance
61. Sharp part
63. Cheese
66. Yoga pose
68. Submicroscopic pathogen
70. March of ____, 1988 harness race for charity
72. "____ of thousands"
73. Conception
74. Sufficiently skilled
75. Certain lake denizen, affectionately
76. Examination
77. Sow's mate

DOWN

1. Mythological demon
2. Deprive of weapons
3. Flexible handle
4. Diplomacy
5. Cook's implement
6. Film director von Stroheim
7. Skin disease
8. Pauper's clothing
9. Sail
10. Halt, swabby!
11. Alice's acquaintance
12. South Asian (prefix)
13. ____ End, area of London
18. Valiant one
22. Gardener's supply
26. Summit
28. Residue of immolation
29. Philosopher Immanuel
30. Ultimate
31. "...go with us; we'll look to that ____"
33. Wyoming town
34. Turquoise, approximately
35. Large city in the tropics
36. Ardent
37. Festival sometimes held in March
39. Singer McEntire

41. Simpletons
44. Fictional captain
47. Gardener's implement
52. Sports official, for short
54. Gershwin and Glass
56. Theodor Geisel's nom de plume
57. Sobriquets
58. Star of the movie *Anna Karenina*
59. ____ Gay, famous aircraft
60. In the future
61. Twitter founder Williams
62. Mince
64. Revise
65. Rip ____
67. Pierce
69. Animal abode
71. Ingurgitate

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

March Madness

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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75				76						77				



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Bethlehem Church is home for the Groundcover Office

SUNDAY SERVICES

All are welcome

8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship Services

10:00 am ~ Church School

UPCOMING EVENTS

~~ March 5th ~~

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

12:00 noon & 7:00 p.m.

All are welcome

~~ March 15th and March 28th ~~

BETHLEHEM'S FAMOUS PRETZEL BAKES

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(\$1.00 each or \$10.00/dozen)

Saturday March 15 ~ "Holy Rollers" Pretzel Bake

Friday March 28 ~ "Parking Lot" Pretzel Bake

Where Friendship Lives

by Deborah Gough
Groundcover Contributor

I passed a Blind Man who would not see, yet he showed me warmth though I wore raggedy torn jeans. I later passed a Girl in a wheelchair waiting on the green light. As I approached she kindly said, "You go ahead and cross. I'll be alright." I later passed children playing ball in a field, who yelled, "Do you want to play?" Even though they didn't know me, they were friendly and sweet as they stopped me on the streets.

I turned and went another way where dogs barked, people Hollering at each other, but not one kind word as the night came and it started getting Dark. What a change from the Park to the Dog that Barked. From Friendly people showing warmth and People who yelled. I'd rather travel the Less Traveled road that leads to Friendship.

Advocating

by Paul Lambert
Groundcover Contributor

Speaking up in public
For all the world to see
Words of peace and justice
Call forth a better world to be

Is your neighbor poor and hungry?
Are there homeless by the score?
Take a chance and take a stand
For hope and truth more

Though I was tired and hungry
T'was for one night only
Best to stop the lack from spreading
Filling my own need
To see more people just having enough

Make it if you can

by Deborah Gough

Living in the Ghetto was the way of my life. Watching the Homeless as they did dumpster dives. The Poor were the prey of the thieves through the night that sought after possessions that they held onto so tight. Children walking home from school in a neighborhood where two or three houses, some burned down, some torn down, but no longer stood. The cries of the People were Lord we need a change. Where are our leaders? Is there anyone who is Humane? We need better living conditions and War on Crime rather than giving up and saying never the mind, but come up with solutions to our problems at hand. Let not History repeat itself. I don't give a wham, cold callous people in a dead zone saying, "Make it if you can."

March Calendar of Events

March 4/11/18/25 – Tuesday Resume Clinics, 9-11 a.m. Learn how to construct a resume and receive professional advice and editing. Washtenaw County Michigan Works! Career Transition Center, Key Bank Building, 2nd Floor, 301 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: (734) 544-6799; TDD (800) 649-3777.

March 4 – Film/Discussion: "Our Fires Still Burn," 7-9 p.m. Film screening of 2013 documentary about modern-day Michigan Native Americans, followed by a discussion with the filmmaker, Audrey Geyer. Open to the public; donations welcome. Church of the Good Shepherd, 2145 Independence Blvd., Ann Arbor. More info: www.icpj.net, chuck@icpj.org, (734) 972-8304.

March 7 – "Peace Generator" Monthly World-Healing Peace Circle, 7-9 p.m. Join others from all walks of life in silent prayer or focused meditation toward peace, understanding, joy, and healing for your family, the world, and yourself. Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, 704 Airport Blvd., Ann Arbor. More info: www.peacegenerator.org, info@peacegenerator.org.

March 10-21 – Rotate Your Food Drive 2014, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Drop off canned and other non-perishable food items at numerous participating businesses in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Dexter, and Saline. For collection locations, visit www.annarborrotate.org, (734) 761-2796.

March 14 – Growing Hope Monthly Community Potluck and Sustainability Film Series, 6-9 p.m. A monthly event to cultivate community and engage anyone interested in sustainable communities, urban farming, and healthy food access. All are invited (including kids) to share in a meal and discussion with friends and neighbors. Film screening of 2010 documentary about the ongoing threat of nuclear weapons, *Countdown to Zero*, immediately following potluck (roughly 7 p.m.). Please bring a dish to pass, and RSVP. Ypsilanti Public Library Downtown Branch, 229 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: ypsilantipubliclibrary.org/content/sustainability-film-series, erin@growinghope.net.

March 15 – Benefit Concert: The Accidentals and Bennett, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Grace Ann Arbor Church sponsors a local debut performance by two Michigan-based nationally touring bands. All proceeds go to Food Gatherers. Tickets \$15. Grace Ann Arbor Church, 2803 Boardwalk Dr., Ann Arbor. More info: www.foodgatherers.org.

March 17 – Debate: U.S. Healthcare Policy, 2:30-4 p.m. Avik Roy, opinion editor at Forbes, Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and former health policy advisor to then presidential candidate Mitt Romney, will debate senior editor at the New Republic and author of Sick, Jonathan Cohn over the viability of the Affordable Care Act. Free and open to the public. 1120 Weill Hall, 735 S. State St., Ann Arbor. More info: fordschool.umich.edu.

March 25-30 – 52nd Annual Ann Arbor Film Festival, all day. Enjoy short films by more than 20 local filmmakers. More info and ticket purchase: aafilmfest.org.

March 25 – "Take a Chance Tuesday": live & free music at The Ark, 8-10 p.m. Food Gatherers benefit concert featuring rock 'n' roll artist Jake Clemons. The

Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. Free; donations of nonperishable food items accepted. More info: www.theark.org, (734) 761-1451.

March 29 – Social Justice Art Festival, 12-5 p.m. U-M School of Social Work -sponsored event will feature exhibits, activities for attendees, and live performances relevant to social justice issues. U-M School of Social Work, 1080 S. University Ave., Ann Arbor. More info: ssw.umich.edu.

March 30 – Discussion Panel: "From Retribution to Healing: Advancing Restorative Approaches to Justice in Washtenaw County," 7-9 p.m. 2014 Annual Meeting of the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice will close with a panel discussion (~8 p.m.) highlighting local efforts to promote restorative justice approaches within our schools and courts. Free and open to the public. First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, 4001 Ann Arbor – Saline Rd., Ann Arbor. More info: www.icpj.net, info@icpj.org, (734) 663-1870.

YOU HEARD IT HERE

Margaret Waterman Alumnae Group helps family get Sylvia to U-M

by Jan Hartmann and Zoe Behnke
Groundcover Contributors

From its 30-person membership in the early 1950s, the University of Michigan Margaret L. Waterman Alumnae Group has grown to over 400 strong. Scholarship awards totaling more than \$500,000 have been given to students since the group's inception in 1952.

One of the scholarship winners for 2013-2014 is Sylvia Escolero. This is her first year to be awarded this scholarship.

Sylvia grew up in northwest part of Washington, D.C. metro area. Her parents immigrated to the United States from El Salvador when they were approximately 18 years old. She is the third of four children. Education is very important to her family.

She had never heard of University or Ann Arbor. Her brother thought she would go to a university on the east coast that was affordable. She did the typical college tours and submitted applications. A friend of hers was attending the University of Michigan and really enjoyed it. He told her to apply to U-M. She took the college tour with a classmate and loved the school spirit. Her criteria for choosing a college included a financial aid package, research, and study abroad opportunities. She would be the first person in her family to attend U-M. Her dad drove her to the airport and they discussed several theories revolving around getting Sylvia to college. Her mom told her she had to work for it.

The whole family pitched in to help her to come here. There was a list by the door with every family member's name on it, titled "Get Sylvia to U-M," with a task on it. She carefully researched and applied for college scholarships. After she was admitted, she had to keep looking for scholarships and grants. Sylvia attended a scholarship dinner and hosts at her table told her to apply for the Waterman Scholarship.

She enjoyed her first lecture listening



Waterman scholarship recipient and cancer survivor, Sylvia Escolero, is now a junior at U-M majoring in neuroscience.

to Chuck Helppie and dining with the women at the table. She thought it would be a great way to network and listen to different perspectives regarding her career.

Sylvia is now a junior in the Neuroscience program, and U-M is one of the few universities that offer it. Sylvia chose this field because she had cancer when she was seven. Sylvia would like to know what caused her cancer – was it genetic or environmental – and what the underlying component to it was. This degree will prepare her to either attend medical school or the School of Optometry.

The Waterman scholarship assists her with the goal of graduating in four years instead of five years. She works, unpaid, at a research lab on campus.

In her free time, she likes everything with a board in it except skateboarding; she enjoys snowboarding, wakeboarding, and sand boarding. Her favorite book is *The Kite Runner*, a real page-turner; she read it standing on her bed.

The Waterman Alumnae Group sprang from a discussion at the July 15, 1952 meeting of the Lucille B. Conger

Alumnae Group on the need for an outgrowth group of "young women graduates who might prefer evening meetings." The first meeting of this new group was held the following spring at the Ann Arbor Women's City Club, with 30 enthusiastic founding members in attendance. At that time, it was called the New Michigan Alumnae Club. Later that year, it officially became The University of Michigan Margaret L. Waterman Alumnae Group, named for its sponsor Margaret Lawlor Waterman, a former directress of the University Alumni Association.

The Waterman Group supports and promotes, through cooperation with

the University of Michigan Alumnae Council and as an affiliate of the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan, the advancement of the educational interests of U-M and closer fellowship among alumni, alumnae, students and friends of the University. The main focus of the group, however, is to raise money to provide scholarships for deserving U-M students. Scholarship recipients are chosen from a pool of students who apply through the U-M Office of Financial Aid.

Margaret Waterman Alumnae Group sponsors a luncheon-lecture series to raise scholarship money for U-M students in need. The luncheons are held at the Michigan League, and the spring speakers for 2014 are:

- April 10: Filmmaker, Sharon Yamato, will talk about her family's history in the Japanese internment camps during World War II.
- May 13: Former FBI profiler, Clint Van Zandt, will speak on his noted cases like the Unabomber and negotiating with David Koresh in Waco, Texas.

Membership in Waterman is open to both women and men, and a member does not have to be a graduate of U-M. For tickets, please call Carolyn Tyson at (734) 426-1577.



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Kiwanis programs and thrift shop

continued from page 6

the international Kiwanis organization, which funds projects to help children around the world. Its biggest current campaign is the Eliminate Project. The purpose of this mission is to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus, which takes the lives of nearly 61,000 infants globally every year. The goal of Kiwanis International is to raise \$110 million to immunize every pregnant woman at risk for contracting tetanus during childbirth, thereby protecting both mother and child.

Though Kiwanis is a club, non-members are also welcome to participate, learn more about it and help the community. The Ann Arbor club hosts a lunch meeting with a speaker, which is open to the public, every Monday at their location at 200 South 1st Street. The talks are on a variety of subjects in accordance with who is giving the talk that day. For the month of March, the speakers will be as follows: Jim Kosteva (U-M Director of Communications) on March 3, Susan Beckett (Publisher of Groundcover News) on March 10, and Erik Bakich (U-M Baseball Team Coach) on March 17).

The club in Ann Arbor is a unique branch of Kiwanis because, in addition to raising money throughout the year

through traditional fundraising efforts, they also host a weekly thrift sale on Saturday mornings at their location on 1st Street. By shopping here, the community can get great deals and also help aid the efforts of the local Kiwanis club, since all profits go to furthering the interests of the organizations with which the club is involved. It is quite an impressive shop, consisting of four floors of merchandise including furniture, kitchenware, children's toys, electronics, clothing, books and much more.

If one wants to get involved in the Kiwanis organization, it is best to start with the monthly meetings. In order to attain membership, one must be referred by an already existing member. Once recommended, one must fill out an application and then be interviewed by one of the club's ex-presidents. According to current Ann Arbor Kiwanis President John Dahl, the club wants to expand their impact and membership and it is very rare that someone who wants to join is denied membership upon completing the application process.

To learn more about the local Kiwanis group, visit a2kiwanisfoundation.org. For more on the international Kiwanis organization, visit www.kiwanis.org.

Gerrymandering

continued from page 4

Meanwhile, a *Roll Call* survey calls the new 14th District of Detroit one of the "Top Five Ugliest Districts" in the whole country. It winds around to include half of Southwest Detroit, the riverfront, Grosse Point and many of the city's suburbs – an unlikely configuration – which probably influenced Mr. Wolf in the title of his article about gerrymandering. This sad state of affairs goes largely unnoticed. In my experience, when Michiganders are told that we are one of the worst gerrymandered states, the response is jaw-dropping and mostly incredulous stares. The general public seems unaware of this sad state of events.

But, there is still another route open to us to make this monstrosity go away. As already discussed, in Michigan an amendment to the state constitution can be introduced by citizens.

Michigan is not foreign to such citizen amendments. This technique was successfully used here in 2012 to get the *Collective Bargaining Rights* proposal (it lost in the general election) and the *Emergency Manager Law* (it won) on the ballot.

What are the implications of a constitutional petition against gerrymandering?

Mr. Wolf, in his article, further stated, "Michigan, Ohio and Florida are the states where such initiatives will be the most effective." Just think about it: if this model works in Michigan, it could spread to other states where gerrymandering is bending the will of the people. When it comes to preventing gerrymandering we should remind ourselves what Edmund Burke said back in the 18th century in his oft-repeated quote: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

Gerrymandering is not one of those gray areas whose virtues might be debated. It is pure evil that puts a stake in the very heart of our freedoms.

I will be reaching out to officials and people active in politics in Michigan in the coming months in an attempt to get the ball rolling on a ballot initiative. If you are interested in joining this grassroots crusade that can have a crucial national impact, e-mail me at [stolzie@speakeeasy.com](mailto:stolzie@speakeasy.com).

I will keep our readers informed of the progress in coming issues of Groundcover.



Cryptoquote Solution

"When you're not at the table, oftentimes you're on the menu."
– Jeremy Moss

4	1	7	5	9	2	6	3	8
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7	5	4	8	6	3	1	2	9
9	6	3	1	2	5	4	8	7
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Apple Crisp



by Lisa Sonnenburg
Groundcover Contributor

4 medium tart apples, cubed
2/3 cup brown sugar, packed
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup rolled oats
1/3 cup margarine or butter, softened
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Heat oven to 375°F. Grease 8 x 8 x 2-inch square pan, or 10-inch pie pan. Arrange apples in pan. Mix sugar, flour, oats, margarine/butter, cinnamon and nutmeg together in a bowl until well-mixed. Sprinkle mixture over apples. Bake about 30 minutes or until topping is golden brown and apples are tender. Serve warm. If desired, serve with ice cream. Makes 6 servings.

An easy dessert! When different fruits are in season, try with peaches, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and/or blackberries.

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